

Remarks in Las Vegas, Nevada October 31, 1996

The President. Thank you. I think the first thing I should say is, happy birthday, Nevada. I am so glad to be here today, so delighted to see all of you here in not only large numbers but with genuine enthusiasm. You should feel good about your country and good about our future.

I want to thank the Green Valley High School Band for playing the national anthem, thank you; the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing Visual Arts, thank you. I want to thank the saxophonists who played here earlier from the musicians union and the mariachi band.

Thank you, Madam Mayor. Thank you, County Commission Vice Chair Paul Christianson. You arranged a beautiful day for us here today. I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to a person who is not here with us today, the county commission chair, Yvonne Atkinson-Gates. We're thinking about her, and we miss her. Senator Dina Titus, Assembly Leader Richard Perkins. Thank you, Gladys Knight, for coming and speaking. Thank you, Andre Agassi, for coming. Thank you. Thank you, Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa. And thank you, my good friend Harry Reid.

Ladies and gentlemen, I owe a lot to a lot of people. I'm on the verge of finishing the last campaign I'll ever be in unless I run for the school board someday. And I want to say that every time I come here to Las Vegas, I think of my wonderful mother who loved this community so much and loved to come here. And I wish she were here with me still for this election. I want to thank the mayor for always being so kind to her. And I want to say a special word of thanks, too, to Governor Bob Miller for being there with me in good times and bad—always there, always supporting us, always standing up for what was right and standing up for Nevada.

And I want to tell you that something I have said in the Oval Office of the White House many times—I'd like to say here in public: I believe in Washington, DC, the most underappreciated public servant in the United States Senate is Harry Reid of Nevada. He is a remarkable, remarkable Senator. You should be very

proud of him. You should be very proud of him. You know, because he's a gentleman and he's low-key and he just says what he has to say in a town where hot air and hot rhetoric and divisive actions take precedent, very often the people who really make a difference are not appreciated. Harry Reid should be appreciated here, and every day he's more appreciated back there in Washington.

And thank you, Nell Justice, for having the courage to get up here and give a speech in front of all these people and for embodying, to me, what my job, this campaign, and our common destiny is all about. We are about to choose the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. I believe more strongly than I can say that the greatest days of this country lie before us; that if we make the right decisions, if we do what we have always done in the past at critical times, if we meet our challenges and do it in a way that enables us to live more closely toward our values, our young people here will live in the age of greatest possibility the world has ever known.

We are dramatically changing the way we work and live, the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world. A lot of these changes are very good, but some of them pose very stiff challenges to families. I'll give you one example of the changes that are going on.

When I became President there were about 3 million people working in their homes and making a living. The other day I was in Atlanta at a rally, and I was introduced by a young woman. She and her husband were from Georgia. They were living in New York. They both had jobs there. He got a job in Atlanta; they moved back to Atlanta. She's still working for her company in New York, in Atlanta, because of the computer. There were 3 million people doing that in 1992. There are 12 million people doing that in 1996. There will be 30 million people doing that in the year 2000. That is just one example.

The frontiers of knowledge are being pushed back dramatically. The life expectancy for people with HIV and AIDS is more than twice what it was just 4 years ago. We have uncovered—

we have discovered, medical researchers, the first real treatment for stroke victims that offers promise. Two of the genes which cause breast cancer were just uncovered. And I allocated another \$30 million to that research just a week ago. It is really within our reach not only to cure but prevent that disease in the future.

For the first time, a few weeks ago a laboratory animal with its spine completely severed had movement in its lower limbs because of nerve transplants to the spine from other parts of the body. These are unbelievable things. We just signed a contract, the United States Government did, with IBM to build jointly a supercomputer over the next couple of years that will do as many calculations in one second as you can do at home on your calculator in 30,000 years.

This world is changing. And America is faced with the question of what to do about the changes. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I had a vision of what I wanted our country to be like in the 21st century. And I'm so glad there are so many young people here today because that will be your century. For me, it's pretty straightforward. I want every child in America, without regard to race or gender or where you start out in life, to have the same chance to live up to your God-given abilities and the same chance to live out your dreams that I and the members of my generation had. You deserve it, and I am determined to see that you get it.

I want our great country to continue to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I know that makes me do things from time to time that aren't especially popular, whether it's trying to stop the bloody war in Bosnia or kick the dictators out in Haiti or stand up for the cause of peace in Northern Ireland or try to deal with the problems of our neighbors to the south in Mexico. But America is stronger today than it was 4 years ago. No Russian missiles are pointed at our children today, for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, and we're moving in the right direction there.

And I want our country to be coming together around our basic values. I want us to be able to celebrate, laugh about, cherish our diversity, and say, we're bound together by our belief in the values that have made America great, but otherwise we don't discriminate against anybody. We want to go forward in an American

community in which everybody has a place and a role to play.

Five days before this election, I want you to be upbeat about America, optimistic about your future, and determined to make the choice that will guarantee that that vision can be made real in your lives and the lives of your friends and neighbors. That is the choice.

For me, it is best expressed in this idea of a bridge to the 21st century. I believe that there's a real difference here between Senator Dole and me, between Senator Coffin and Congressman Ensign. And I believe it's an honest difference. I don't like all this harsh rhetoric and personal attacks and attempts to convince people that your opponent is no good. I don't think there is very much to that.

I'm about to end my last campaign. I can tell you this: I've been working at this for over 20 years now. Most of the people I've met in both parties, from all points on the political spectrum, have loved our country, have wanted what was best for it, worked hard and were honest, contrary to the image that is often portrayed. There are honest differences here, and you should be exuberant that you have a choice to make between honest differences.

I don't believe that we should go into this—I know that there will be more individual choices than ever before. I know people can do things on their computers and will be able to do more. Pretty soon you can do all your shopping by computers. People won't even have to go out the door if they don't want to. I know that there will be more opportunities for us to do things as individuals. But I still believe that our country will only be great if we are determined to build a bridge to the future that we're all going to be able to walk across together, if we give everybody the tools to make the most of his or her own life. That's what I believe.

And that's the choice. Would we be better off being told, "You're on your own, and we hope you do well," or as a person I'm reasonably close to once said, do we believe it takes a village to raise a child, to build a future, to build a country? That is the choice.

That was the choice we faced starkly about a year ago when Senator Dole and Congressman Gingrich and Congressman Ensign voted for a budget that would have cut education for the first time in modern history, would have reduced the number of children in Head Start,

eliminated the AmeriCorps national service program, cut college loans, terribly, terribly, terribly weakened the ability of the United States to protect our environment and to continue to enhance it.

It would have repealed for the first time in 30 years our guarantee of health care to elderly people in nursing homes, to the very standards of care we have in nursing homes. It would repeal the guarantee of care to our poorest children and the middle class families who have family members with disabilities who can maintain a middle class lifestyle because we try to provide decent health care. It would have done all that. It would have allowed employers to raid their employees' pension funds and actually raise taxes on the hardest pressed working families in America. And I vetoed it because I thought it was wrong.

And they thought it was so right for America, they shut the Government down. And they thought that we were such Government lovers, because that's the picture postcard cutout that's always made of us, that all of us would just sort of cave in and let them have their way. And I told them I'd a lot rather see the American people hurt for 3 weeks than for 30 years; no, thank you, we weren't going to have that budget.

But I don't believe that these people didn't believe what they were doing. I think they believed what they were doing was right. But I think they were wrong. And that's what you have to decide. Are we going to build a bridge to the future or a bridge to the past? Are we going to go forward together or be told we're on our own? These are big, big decisions.

Now, 4 years ago when the people in Nevada voted for Al Gore and Bill Clinton, you took us on faith. You don't have to do that anymore. There is a record. And our friends have to face the fact that there is a record. We do have 10½ million more jobs than we had 4 years ago. We do have incomes rising for the first time in a decade, about \$1,600 over the last 2 years for the typical family. We do have the largest drop in child poverty in 20 years, the largest drop in income inequality among working people in 27 years, the lowest rates of unemployment, inflation, and home mortgages combined in 27 years. Those are facts. That's where we are. We're going in the right direction.

We do have a 15-year high in homeownership. We do have 4 years now of declining crime

rates, which is why every major law enforcement organization in America has endorsed the Clinton/Gore ticket for reelection, because we have proved we can lower the crime rate.

We do have 4 years of declining welfare rolls, 1.9 million fewer people on the welfare rolls. We do have cleaner air, safer drinking water, higher standards for food safety. We do have vast new protections for our natural resources: the biggest national park network ever created south of Alaska in the Mojave Desert in California; 1.7 million acres of wilderness in southern Utah, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. We're cleaning up the Florida Everglades. We're moving this country forward, and we have proved, yes, you can grow the economy and preserve the environment at the same time. We have proved that.

Ten million people benefited from the increase in the minimum wage. Twelve million people took a little time off when a baby was born or a family member was sick without losing their jobs because of family leave. Twenty-five million Americans may be able to keep their health insurance now because we passed a law that says you cannot have your health insurance jerked from you because you changed jobs or someone in your family has been sick.

America is a better place because I signed a law that says mothers and their newborn babies can't be kicked out of the hospital in 24 hours, too. We're a better place because we're trying to provide more insurance coverage for mental health problems that so many of our families face. We're a better place because finally, after so long, way too long, we're giving health care and disability benefits to Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange whose children have spina bifida as a result of it. We're a better place because we're doing these things together. We're a better place because child support collections are up 50 percent, \$4 billion a year in the last 4 years. This is a better place.

So I say to you, my fellow Americans, you don't just totally have to take it on faith anymore. There is a record. The evidence is there. And the question now is, what are we going to do for the future? I know it's Halloween, you know. And I understand why on Halloween people like to scare other people. But yesterday—with new evidence our economy is growing at about 3 percent a year, better than any other industrial country; we've got a 5 percent in-

crease in personal income after inflation this year; we've got the highest rate of business investment since John Kennedy was President—and we've done the things I've described, as they said, having the smallest Federal Government since President Kennedy, and we abolished more Government programs, more Government regulations and privatized more Government operations than the Republicans did in the 12 years they ran before our administration. So I understand all that.

So along comes my opponent yesterday and says we have the worst economy in 20 years. Do you believe that?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. Is this the worst economy in Las Vegas in 20 years?

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. If you think it is, you ought to vote for him. But now, the interesting thing is, this being Halloween, is that 2 weeks ago he said we had the worst economy in 100 years. I made up 80 years in just 2 weeks. I think you ought to feel good. Now, back in February, Senator Dole, in a more candid and open and accurate moment, said we had the best economy in 30 years—the best economy. That's when he was right.

That doesn't mean we don't have more to do. And one of the things that I worry about all the time is—you know, life is about more than economics. Most of us work so that we'll have the wherewithal to live in the way we want to live, to raise our children well, to enjoy our lives, to find some personal fulfillment, to have good lives. And on Halloween, even though it's supposed to be "fright night," I always think that what I really want is a safer Halloween for all of our children and stronger families and safer neighborhoods.

So I say to you, I want you to feel good about America, and I want you to make this choice based on these two big ideas, because we still have more work to do. If we want to strengthen our families, we have to help parents succeed at home and at work. I was for the family leave law; he was against it. We had an honest difference of opinion. He said it would hurt the economy, but we've had 3 years of record starts of new small businesses and over 10 million jobs. You know who was right and who was wrong. The evidence is there.

And I think we ought to extend family leave. I think people ought to be able to go see their

children's teachers twice a year and go to the doctor's appointment with them without losing their jobs.

There is nothing more important than helping parents succeed at home and at work. If the parents of America have to choose between their children or their job, we are in trouble, whichever choice they have to make. Their most important job is raising our children, but we have to have a strong economy. If we have a strong economy at the expense of raising our children, what are we working for anyway? We have got to work to create conditions in which everybody believes, "I can do my work, and I can still be a good parent." There is no more important agenda for America.

We have to help parents pass their values along to their children, and they should be reinforced. That's why I fought for more educational television. That's why I fought for a V-chip in new TV's and a rating system so you can control what young children see. Every study shows that too much violence too young numbs children to the meaning of violence and undermines their ability to see other people with dignity and respect. We have to deal with that.

That's why we fought for the safe and drug-free schools program, and we got more than double the number of children who now see D.A.R.E. officers and others in their schools saying, "Don't do drugs. They will kill you. They will ruin your lives. You deserve a better chance." We were right to fight for that. That's why I fought to stop the big tobacco companies from advertising and marketing cigarettes to children illegally. It was wrong.

Now, in every single one of those instances, Senator Dole disagreed with me. That doesn't make him a bad person, but I think I'm right, and I think he was wrong about that. And you have to decide who you think is right.

I believe we've got to keep our streets safe. I know it was unpopular in Nevada when we passed the crime bill and the Brady bill. I know a lot of people in the rural parts of this State were told, "There they go again, those crazy Democrats and that awful President. They're going to take guns away from hunters and sports people." Well, you know something? I grew up in a State where more than half the people have a hunting or a fishing license or both. I was shooting a .22 at old tin cans when I was 12. But we don't need assault weapons on

our street. They're designed to kill people. They're designed to kill people.

And that's just like a lot of this stuff. That's what they said 2 years ago, but now we know. We've got a record. Not a single Nevada sportsman has lost a weapon, but 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers didn't get handguns because of the Brady bill.

We're putting more police on our streets—this is unbelievable—if we keep going until we get all 100,000 police on the street, instead of 4 years of declining crime we'll have 8 years of declining crime. We might actually be able to feel safe again in every community in this country.

Here again my opponent voted against 100,000 police. Senator Coffin's opponent voted to eliminate it, even in the evidence—in the face of the evidence that the crime rate was coming down, they voted to stop doing it. I don't understand it. But that's one reason, when I was in Arizona this morning before I came here, that Bill Bratton, the former commissioner of police in New York City and Boston—and in New York City, because of community policing, because they put more police on the street, they brought the crime rate down 39 percent and the murder rate down 50 percent—and he endorsed Bill Clinton and Al Gore because he knows we ought to finish the job of putting 100,000 police on the street. And I want you to help us do it.

I believe, as strongly as I can say, that we need to do these things block by block, community by community. We have to work together to make the American dream work. That's why I wanted someone like Nell Justice to introduce me, someone who has taken responsibility for her children, someone who's active in her community.

I don't believe that the President for a moment can take full credit for any of the achievements that I've talked to you about. But it is the job of the President to do those things which we should do together as a country. And it is the job of the President to imagine the future and to try to lead the country into a better, brighter future in a way that is consistent with our values.

What we have here in America today is an old-fashioned partnership. We're out working today to mobilize another million volunteers to work with police officers in their neighborhoods because we know community citizen groups can

drive the crime rate down. I've asked a million volunteers a year to join with us to make sure every 8-year-old can read independently by the third grade. These are things we have to do together.

But how we do it, what we do in Washington determines whether you can do it here. So you have to decide, do we want to balance the budget as I want to and still protect Medicare, Medicaid, education, the environment, technology? Or do we want to do what they want to do, which is to promise you a big tax cut that will blow a hole in the deficit, actually raise taxes on 9 million working people and will require bigger cuts in the environment, in education, in Medicare and Medicaid than the ones I vetoed? There's a big difference here. It's just an honest difference of opinion. I say balance the budget, protect our values, invest in our future.

Do we want to keep reforming health care step by step? We've made a good start. My balanced budget plan—which cannot be funded by them—my balanced budget plan will help families that are between jobs keep their health insurance for 6 months, add another million children to the rolls of those with health insurance, provide free mammograms to women on Medicare. And for the over 1½ million families that are courageously out there caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's, it will give them some respite care. That is hard duty, and that's important, and we can do it. I think we ought to do it. Will you help us do that? *[Applause]*

And let me say this, especially to the young people: The two biggest differences, the two biggest choices you have to make—the first is about education. I am telling you, I would not be here today, no way in the world would I be here today—I was born to a widowed mother in a little town in Arkansas; she married my stepfather, who did not have a high school diploma—if it hadn't been for my family drumming into me the importance of education and for the opportunities I was given, I wouldn't be here today. I know every politician stands up, loves to give speeches about self-reliance. Well, the woman who introduced me is self-reliant. But we all need a hand, too.

Every politician would like you to believe that he or she was born in a log cabin they built by themselves. *[Laughter]* But that's just not true, folks. Educational opportunity is the gift we give not only to our children but to our-

selves, to give us a country that can be free and strong and that can grow and go forward together. And we have a lot still to do. Here's how we're going to teach every 8-year-old to read, and 40 percent of them can't do it. We're going to mobilize 30,000 AmeriCorps volunteers and reading specialists to go across this country and get a million others.

One of the things that we did this year I'm very proud of is to allocate 200,000 more work-study slots to college students in the years ahead than we've had. And I want 100,000 of those—100,000, half of them, to be given to college students who say, "If you'll give me work-study money, I'll go teach an 8-year-old to read." And I want you to help me do that.

I want us to hook up every classroom and library in every school in America to the information superhighway, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web. I want every child for the first time in the history of this country, whether in a poor district, a remote rural district, a middle class or a wealthy one, every child for the first time to have access to the same information in the same way at the same time. It will revolutionize education in America.

And I want to open the doors of college education to every single American. I want you to help me make community college, at least 2 years of education after high school, as universal as a high school diploma is today. And it will be easy to do. It will be easy to do. Just let people deduct dollar for dollar from their tax bill the cost of the typical community college tuition. I want to let people save in an IRA and withdraw from it without any tax penalty if the money's used for education or health care or homebuying. And I believe we should give families a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any college tuition, undergraduate, graduate, at any school, for people of any age. And I can pay for it.

Now, they believe that—their education agenda is to abolish the Department of Education.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. You think about this: Two cents on the dollar at the Department of Education goes to administration—or bureaucracy, if you want to use the disparaging term; 98 cents of it goes to help educate our children. What would it say to the world if America, the greatest democracy in the world, were to start the 21st century with no one at the President's Cabinet to speak up for the education of our

children? I say, no. Let's build a bridge to the 21st century with the best education system in the world.

Finally—this may be the most important thing of all—I have spent so much time, heartbreaking time, as your President dealing with the difficulties of other countries who are consumed by racial, religious, ethnic, and tribal hatreds: in Bosnia, people killing one another's children because they were Muslims or Croats or Serbs, even though biologically they are literally indistinguishable; in Northern Ireland, violence continuing, people fighting over battles they fought 3 and 600 years ago—I can say that, they're my people, but it's crazy—the kids over there just want to get on with their lives; in the Middle East, the Holy Land for the three great monotheistic religions of the world, people still unable to lay down their hatreds of one another, rooted in religious differences so old.

All over the world—in Rwanda we sent American forces to be with the French to save hundreds of thousands of lives when the Tutsis and the Hutus were killing each other, and neither one of them had enough money to get along on, neither one of them could provide for their children. And instead of working together to build a prosperous future, they preferred to slaughter one another.

That is why I was so upset when hatred of the Federal Government led to the tragedy of Oklahoma City. That is why, when the churches were being burned, the synagogues defaced, the Muslim centers being defaced, I said, that is not my America. We must stand against it strong and hard.

When the First Lady and our daughter and I went to open the Olympics for the United States in Atlanta, it was one of the great moments of the last 4 years for us, and I was filled with pride as I looked at those people from 197 different national groups walking around the Olympic Stadium and thinking, you know, we've got folks from all those places here in America; we've got people from everywhere here.

So I say to you, this is important, too. We cannot say, you're on your own. We have to say that if you believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, if you're willing to show up for work or school tomorrow and be a good citizen, we need to know nothing else about you. You are part of our America. We're going to build a bridge to-

gether. We're going to walk across it together. And our best days are still ahead.

Will you help me build that bridge? [*Applause*] Will you be there and vote? [*Applause*] If you've voted already, will you bring someone else? [*Applause*] You can go in the courthouse and do it right now. Be there, and we'll have a great celebration for America Tuesday night.

Thank you. God bless you. And bear down. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. at the Clark County Government Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jan Lavery Jones of Las Vegas; State Senator Dina Titus; entertainer Gladys Knight; tennis player Andre Agassi; Nell Justice, who introduced the President; and State Senator Bob Coffin, candidate for Nevada's First Congressional District.

Remarks in Oakland, California October 31, 1996

The President. Let's hear it for Sherman Spears; give him another hand. [*Applause*]

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you, thank you very much. Well, happy Halloween, Oakland. Mr. Mayor, thank you for making me feel at home again. Senator Boxer, Senator Feinstein, Congressman Dellums, how fortunate the people of California are to have you pleading their cause and pushing their futures in Washington, DC. Thank you for your friendship, your support, and your leadership.

I want to thank the House Jacks for the national anthem and their music. They did a great job. I want to say how glad I am to be here with all the people on the podium, including Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis, Congressman Tom Lantos. My Chief of Staff from California, Leon Panetta, is here with me. I want to thank the young people here who are in the neighborhood watch from the Oakland Home Alert; thank you. And I want to thank these young folks who made this bridge to the 21st century for me. Didn't they do a great job? [*Applause*]

I want to echo what has already been said and ask you to help Ellen Tauscher go to the United States Congress. We need her there. She looks like a congresswoman—[*laughter*]—but, more importantly, she'll vote like a congresswoman from California, advancing the interests of all Americans. And I hope you will help her.

You know, folks, I know this is Halloween and we've got a few masks on out there; we've even got a television camera over here masquerading as Freddy Krueger. [*Laughter*]

But I want to ask you tonight to sort of take off the mask for a minute. I want to begin by thanking all the young people in this audience who have come tonight, for more than anything else this election is about your tomorrows. It's about what kind of country we're going to be in the 21st century.

And I want to ask you all to do something tonight for me when you go home. Before you go to sleep, whatever your age is, just see if you can answer this question for yourself: "What would I like my country to look like when we cross that bridge into the 21st century in 4 years? What would I like my country to look like when I have children, like Sherman does? What would I like that to be?"

And I think you will find a good answer. And I want to tell you what my answer is. I believe in a country where everybody, without regard to race, gender, or whatever else, no matter where they start in life, has a chance to live out their dreams. I believe in a country—I believe in a country where America leads the world for people in freedom and prosperity. And I believe in a country where we celebrate our diversity instead of being divided by it, where we're one great, strong community.

So when you choose the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century, you have to ask yourself this question. There is a huge difference here. There's a huge difference in these choices for Congress. And it's not fundamentally about party, it's about what you want America to be like. They say you'd be better off on your own. I say—as a friend of mine said, someone I'm reasonably